

VZCZCXYZ0006
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLB #1235 3221018
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 181018Z NOV 09
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6075

UNCLAS BEIRUT 001235

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/RA AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [KTIP](#) [KWMN](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SMIG](#) [LE](#)
SUBJECT: 2009 TIP INTERIM ASSESSMENT: LEBANON

REF: STATE 112489

¶1. (U) Summary: This 2009 TIP Interim Assessment for Lebanon is submitted in response to action request in reftel. The Government of Lebanon (GOL) made limited progress in addressing trafficking in persons (TIP) issues, partially because of parliamentary inaction before the June 2009 elections and the lack of a government from June until November. An anti-TIP law and a labor law amendment are awaiting action by the new cabinet, which has not yet received a vote of confidence. End Summary.

LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

¶2. (U) Two significant legal initiatives are pending implementation. First, an interministerial review of the proposed national anti-TIP law was completed, and the law is with the ministry of justice (MOJ) pending the cabinet's approval. Second, an amendment to the Labor Law that will extend the same legal protections that Lebanese workers enjoy to all foreign workers was successfully reviewed by the National Steering Committee and sent to the ministry of labor for submission to the cabinet. A separate March 2009 Labor Code revision providing a unified contract for migrant workers was implemented in Arabic. However, the notarized translations of the contract into workers' native languages, as required by the law, have not yet been completed by the International Labor Organization.

ADDITIONAL ANTI-TIP INITIATIVES

¶3. (U) The GOL investigated and prosecuted four new trafficking cases in the last nine months. It also established a working committee on October 14 to draft a standard operating procedure (SOP) to guide the Surete Generale (SG) in identifying victims of trafficking among immigration detainees, referring them for assistance, and managing detainee cases at the SG detention center. This working committee includes representatives from the SG and other GOL agencies, as well as NGOs.

¶4. (U) To prevent abuse of artist work visas for prostitution, SG is cooperating with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on the pilot Moldova Project, which provides Moldovan artists training and information on their rights and resources in Lebanon, including hotline and emergency telephone numbers, in both Russian and Moldovan. The final implementation phase is scheduled to occur in late November under the auspices of the ministries of justice and interior. UNODC is also working with the MOJ and SG to permit sex workers who are victims of trafficking to remain in Lebanon for at least one year to allow the courts and SG time to investigate and prosecute their cases. The SG has undertaken to create similar resources for women from Belarus, Morocco, and Tunisia based on the Moldovan pilot project. This second phase of the UNODC TIP program is scheduled to conclude in 2010.

¶5. (U) In July, NGOs convinced the general prosecutor for the Mount Lebanon region to refer victims of trafficking to NGOs to receive services rather than prosecuting them for crimes that resulted from their being trafficked (e.g., immigration violations). NGO interlocutors also report improvements in identifying and handling victims at the SG due to officer training programs. In June, the SG detention center also began installing upgrades -- including cable televisions for each detainee area, air conditioning and better air circulation, and new automatic doors with emergency safety-release locks -- to improve detainees' living conditions during processing. The detention center is also now using computerized spreadsheets to track the admission date, status, and legal or civil charges for each detainee.

¶6. (U) COMMENT: A new cabinet was named in early November after a five-month hiatus, but it remains in caretaker status until ratified by parliament, which is expected to occur by early December. To achieve significant progress, the new cabinet must pass and implement the pending anti-TIP law and the Labor Law amendment.

DAUGHTON